



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January, 20 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff, Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Chertoff and Secretary Rice:

We are writing in response to your January 17th joint announcement, "Secure Borders and Open Doors in the Information Age," as it relates to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

According to your announcement the Departments of State and Homeland Security (DHS) will "...produce an inexpensive, secure, biometric passport card as an alternative to a traditional passport book for use by U.S. citizens in border communities." This card will meet the statutory requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

Successful implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is critical for the districts we represent. Accordingly, we respectfully request that officials from both DHS and State brief the Members of the Congressional Northern Border Caucus regarding this alternative travel card at your earliest convenience.

During this briefing, we request that further details of the alternative travel card be provided. Specifically, we request answers to the following questions:

- How will the application and adjudication process work?
  - Where will the application be available and how will it be processed?
  - What will be the turnaround or processing time for the application?
  - Will there be provisions in place for expedited processing?
  - Are you working with the U.S. Postal Service to lower the cost of having them accept applications for the new card, and to expedite their handling process?

- How much will the alternative card cost our constituents? Are any special pricing programs envisioned to encourage acquisition of the card?
- Where are you going to obtain the necessary resources for this alternative travel card and for the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative as a whole?
- Will there be a public relations or marketing campaign for the new alternative card? If so, what are you doing in preparation of this? What form will that campaign take?
- Is the technology available yet to produce and read this alternative document?
- What technology do you envision using for this travel card?
- Will this alternative card serve as a platform for the expedited or trusted traveler programs, such as FAST, NEXUS and SENTRI? If so, will this option be readily available prior to the land border crossing requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative?
- How will you address the U.S. citizens that attempt to re-enter the country without a passport or an alternative travel card?

Please contact Amy Fuerstenau in Congressman Stupak's office (225-4735) or Meredith Curcio in Congressman Sweeney's office (225-5614) to schedule the requested briefing or with any other questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Bart Stupak, Co-Chair, MI-1

John Sweeney, Co-Chair, NY-20

Slaughter, NY-28; Higgins, NY-27; Michaud, ME-2; Inslee, WA-1; Reynolds, NY-26; Smith, WA-9; Larsen, WA-2; McMorris, WA-5; Kilpatrick, MI-13; McCotter, MI-11; Pomeroy, ND-At Large; Baird, WA-3; Hastings, WA-4; Peterson, MN-7; Brown, OH-13; McHugh, NY-23; Kaptur, OH-9; Bass, NH-2; McNulty, NY-21; Manzullo, IL-16; Miller, MI-10; Dingell, MI-15; Conyers, MI-14